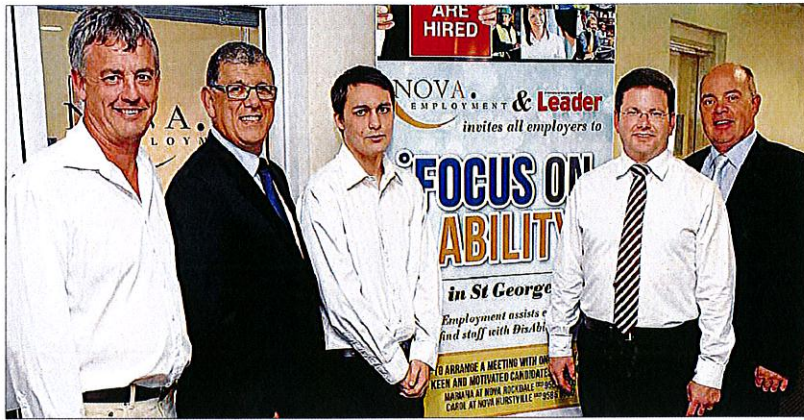


Employment plan runs on time



Meeting the minister: (From left) Colin Benson, Ageing and Disability Services Minister John Ajaka, Declan Kelly, Mark Coure and Nova chief executive Martin Wren. Picture: Jane Dyson

By Tamara Gasser

IF YOU have a disability the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate you are 30 per cent less likely to be working than a person without a disability. But these statistics are shifting says Nova Employment, the non-profit organisation committed to providing job opportunities to those with a disability. Nova chief executive Martin Wren was joined by Disability Services Minister John Ajaka and Oatley MP Mark Coure at Nova's Hurstville office in support of the Focus on Ability campaign, which is headed by the Leader.

Those with a disability reap benefits

The campaign seeks to secure 100 jobs for St George and Sutherland Shire residents with a disability in 90 days from January 1. Already 38 jobs have been created, with about six weeks left to meet the quota. "The 100 jobs challenge is an ambitious project for us and doubles [our rate of] the past 20 years," Mr Wren said. "I'm confident we'll reach our goal by March 31." Minister Ajaka urged employers to hire people with a disability.

"There is an unfair perception and an unjustified belief that a person with a disability will not be able to perform in a job, but the stats show the opposite," he said. "The employers I speak to continuously tell me their best employees are often people with a disability." Colin Benson is one such employer. He owns Walkers Party Hire in Peakhurst and employs three Nova Employment clients. "They've been great; good at

what they do and very enthusiastic and some of the nicest guys we have working for us," Mr Benson said. "When you have a small business you are the HR department, and Nova can take on that role for you and bring people around and give them a start." Declan Kelly, 19, has Asperger syndrome. He completed a transition to work program with Nova Employment last year. "Straight from school I came here and they taught me interview skills and got me this job," he said. Mr Kelly now works for the Royal NSW Bowling Association. Nova, Hurstville: 8568 7700.

JOB COUNTDOWN

Since the launch of the Focus on Ability campaign, 38 people with a disability have now secured a job. Nova Employment has teamed up with the Leader to create 100 jobs in 90 days.



Details: novaemployment.com.au



A good organiser: Barbara Maloney, acknowledged for services to the club. Picture: Jane Dyson

Seniors club prizes its organising lady

THAT old adage: "if you want something done ask a busy person" certainly applies to Barbara Maloney. She can't understand people who say they are bored. "There is so much to do and I am busy every minute," she says. The Monterey resident, 77, does volunteer work, looks after three grandchildren whenever needed, keeps up with family and friends and does a lot of organisational work at the Ramsgate Seniors Club. It takes a good organiser to keep a seniors' club functioning smoothly and the Noel Seiffert Memorial Award is the reward for those who stand out. Mrs Maloney is this year's recipient. She is the one who organises those monthly bus trips to such places as Bowral, Camden, Kiama and Watsons Bay and helps out with the day-to-day stuff like washing up and organising various activities.

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